

Missouri
Special Education
Advisory Panel
Annual Report

Joe Sartorius, Chair
Fiscal Year 2004-2005

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<http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/Administration/AdvisoryPanel/94142reports.html>

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Introduction

This annual report of the Missouri Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) is respectfully submitted to the Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for the State of Missouri. The reporting period is July 1, 2004, through June 30, 2005. The annual report is a summary of panel activities and recommendations during the reporting period. The panel operates in a collaborative spirit with DESE's Division of Special Education in identifying and addressing areas of concern. The panel convenes on a regular basis to review issues relevant to special education in Missouri. Subcommittees meet throughout the year to examine specific targeted areas. The panel is composed of stakeholders including parents of children with disabilities; individuals with disabilities; teachers; representatives of institutions of higher education; administrators of programs for children with disabilities; representatives of state agencies; representatives of private schools and public charter schools; a representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services; and, a representative from the state juvenile and adult corrections agencies.

Advisory Panel Duties

The advisory panel is authorized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The role of the panel is advisory and not advocacy. The panel provides policy guidance on special education and related services and to carry out those specific and general functions set forth in IDEA. The panel shall:

- Advise the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education of unmet needs within the state in the education of children with disabilities;
- Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the state regarding the education of children with disabilities;
- Advise DESE in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the U.S. Department of Education under Section 618 of the Act;
- Advise DESE in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under Part B of the Act; and
- Advise DESE in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.
- Advise DESE in review of complaints and due process hearings.
- Advise on programs for eligible students with disabilities in juvenile and adult corrections agencies.

Missouri's Vision for Special Education Services

We, the people of Missouri, believe that diversity enhances our culture; therefore, we commit our resources and efforts to accept, educate, and support all children and youth. All children and youth, being of diverse backgrounds and abilities, will have access to all learning activities with accommodations and supports to enable them to succeed. All children and youth are actively engaged in creating their own futures; are prepared for life as independent, informed, and empowered citizens; and are embraced as vital, valued, and contributing members of their communities.

Therefore, we need inclusive communities and schools that:

- Recognize that all children and youth can learn;
- Commit to providing equitable opportunities for all children and youth;

- Build on the individual strengths and abilities of each child and youth;
- Collaborate for the benefit of all children and youth; and
- Recognize and involve families as full partners.

The Special Education Advisory Panel is committed to this vision. We believe that all children, including those in special education, are entitled to and deserving of fair and equitable treatment by the educational system. We believe that all local school systems and all students should be held to the highest standards and that all students should receive an appropriate and quality education to prepare them for life beyond the school years.

The panel recognizes that there have always been and will continue to be challenges in providing an appropriate education for each individual student. It is the firm belief and commitment of this panel that the needs of the individual student should be the prime concern of those involved in creating an individualized program. The panel feels a strong responsibility to represent the interests of all students in special education in achieving the best possible outcomes for them in the educational process. The best outcomes can be achieved when all stakeholders work together in a collaborative manner for the best interests of the individual student.

Panel Activities

The advisory panel engages in a number of activities to fulfill its role of advising the Division on special education issues. The following describes activities from 2004-05.

1. Steering Committee for the Missouri Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process

A major project undertaken by the advisory panel is that of acting as the steering committee for the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP). This project has consumed much of the panel's time during the past five years. The CIMP is a mandate of the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The purpose is to monitor and improve the compliance of all states with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The process involves an initial self-assessment followed by improvement planning. As the improvement plan is implemented, ongoing evaluation is conducted to determine the effectiveness of the plan and to make adjustments to the plan as necessary.

- To date, the Great Lakes Area Regional Resource Center (GLARRC) has assisted the SEAP with this responsibility. Due to a contract change, North Central Regional Resource Center (NCRRC) replaced GLARRC as the regional resource center for Missouri. It is expected that the NCRRC will continue to provide any needed assistance in the future.
- The role of the state special education advisory panel continues to be shaping services for children with disabilities. The special education advisory panel will continue to monitor the Continuous Improvement and Focused Monitoring System (CIFMS), the Annual Performance Plan, and the State Performance Plan. Advisory panels continue to be key stakeholders in efforts to improve educational opportunities for children with disabilities with the increasing challenge of providing quality education for all children with disabilities in this country and the requirements of IDEA.

Focused Monitoring Overview – Alan Coulter, Director of the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring, provided information to the Panel regarding focused monitoring and focused accountability. OSEP has made improvements in its monitoring of

states. The Panel requested to review the implementation checklist after it is completed next year. It was recommended to the Panel that it should look at the “Big” picture for the entire state, not individual incidents.

2. Missouri Annual Performance Report

The Annual Performance Report (APR) combines the components of performance reporting (data reporting/analysis) and improvement planning (future targets and activities to meet those targets). In April 2004, Missouri submitted to OSEP the APR for the 2002-03 reporting year as well as future activities for 2003-04 and onward. The time period for the future activities was the same as for the improvement plan, so the APR copies the dateline of the improvement plan. The APR for the 2003-04 reporting year was submitted to OSEP on March 31, 2005. The state performance plan (replacing the APR) must now be a six-year plan (targets and improvements) and is due December 2005. It is very similar to APR but some of the terminology has changed. Each indicator will require DESE to define how it will be measured, provide the baseline data, and establish measurable and rigorous targets, and improvement activities, timelines, and resources. It was recommended the subcommittees thoroughly review the most recent annual performance report, keeping in mind that DESE must develop targets and improvement strategies for the next six years.

One of the new requirements with the reauthorized IDEA is that DESE report annually to the public on district performance based on these indicators.

3. Formal Recommendations to DESE

Below are formal recommendations that were presented and discussed at SEAP meetings.

- Formal Recommendation #8 (Due Process – October 7, 2004) – The current survey on due process withdrawals contains three questions. DESE’s recommendation is to try this survey for a year and then make changes to it if needed. DESE staff will be directed to ask these questions when taking a withdrawal over the telephone. It was recommended by the Monitoring Committee that DESE try this for a year and see what data is collected. A report will be provided to the Panel when the survey is completed – including when the surveys were started, how many surveys were sent out, how many were answered, and how many issues were raised. Those receiving the survey will be asked to return it within two weeks. Parents will be provided a self-addressed stamped envelope. Surveys will be sent out immediately for withdrawals for 2003-2004 and for those that have come in since July 1, 2004. A motion was made to accept this letter/survey. The motion was seconded and passed.
- Formal Recommendation #3 (February 18, 2005) passed requesting that beginning with fourth cycle MSIP, training be made mandatory for a district if it is found that it is needed. This recommendation was determined completed June 2005.
- Formal Recommendation #9 (Child Complaint Review) – The Monitoring Committee recommended and the SEAP accept the development of a child complaint investigation review process June 2004. DESE submitted language for the survey and the Monitoring Committee recommended some clarifications so DESE could immediately begin the survey process – June 2005.
- Formal Recommendation #11 (DESE Response to Parent Inquiries, June 2005) – Requests that DESE respond to parent inquiries within thirty days. DESE submitted its report for the process of responding to parent inquiries and at the June 2005 meeting, the

committee recommended and SEAP accepted that Formal Recommendation #11 be determined completed.

4. Changes to Annual Performance Report

The Evaluation Committee recommended that there be no change to the 2004-2005 Panel report. A review will occur during 2005-2006 to determine possible format changes for the 2005-2006 Panel report.

5. Participation in OSEP Conference

In March 2005, the panel Chair attended an OSEP conference in Washington, D.C. The conference focused on Missouri's Annual Performance Report (APR) and how it will align with IDEA. OSEP will send their response to DESE. The Advisory Panel will assist in this process and advise DESE on how to meet these requirements. A full report was given to the entire panel.

6. Public Comment

The panel was advised on a number of issues both from DESE and from individual panel members surrounding special education. Minutes from panel meetings are available on the DESE web site. Visitors are welcome to comment at any of the panel meetings.

Panel Meeting – August 11, 2004

- Focused Monitoring Overview – Alan Coulter, Director of the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring (acoulter@lsuhsc.edu), provided information to the Panel regarding focused monitoring and focused accountability.
- Lewis Discussion – The Division is proposing a revision to the Part B state regulations. The revision that will go to State Board in October will add Section XII that will detail how the Division will implement. The discussion focused on the inability of DESE with current staff to allocate staff to attend IEPs of students who may qualify for reimbursement. Proposed implementation would be for districts to submit paperwork on students they believe would qualify for reimbursement. If a student qualifies, reimbursement will be based on the four eligibility criteria and the LRE requirements of IDEA. If a student qualifies, it would be with 100% funding.
- Missouri's Response to OSEP – DESE discussed with the Panel the areas of noncompliance. Discussion focused on interagency agreements not meeting the OSEP requirements.
- State Improvement Grant (SIG) – Announcement was made that DESE received the SIG competitive grant in the amount of \$1.3 million that is targeted for professional development. Discussion focused on how to identify schools that have the greatest potential for improvement.

Panel Meeting – October 7, 2004

- Discussion of Formal Recommendation #8 (When a parent (or representative) notifies DESE of desire to withdraw due process request, DESE shall survey the parent (or representative) as to the reason for the withdrawal.). DESE will send out surveys with a

letter explaining anonymous reporting from withdrawals from 2003-2004 and any during this current year. Results will be provided at a future meeting.

- Public Comment Section – Discussion occurred on process for alerting DESE about student and district specific concerns. DESE stated these should be directed to the Compliance Section. Another area discussed was that the process that is set-up for the Panel to track issues for DESE's response is the Formal Recommendation process. The Panel should use this mechanism to ensure DESE responds and/or addresses concerns.
- Effective Practices Section – Discussion focused on the problem solving model, Regional Professional Development Centers' (RPDC) role in training in the state, and nonpublic access to Reading First grants and Reading First. The division is looking at ways to break down the barriers between special education and general education. Training modules have been developed and will be utilizing the train the trainer approach. These modules will also be available to higher education institutions so they can include in their curriculum. In addition, public and nonpublic schools can access training provided by the RPDC. Reading First grants have a caveat that special educators are to be involved in the grant similar to general educators.

Panel Meeting – December 3, 2004

- DESE provided Training/Professional Development Updates – Karen Allan, Assistant Director, Special Education Effective Practices (EP) Section, brought examples of the training modules for the panel to review. EP's mission is to provide research-based effective practices to districts. They have developed a system of train the trainer models to build capacity for providing training.
- CADRE – The Panel requested an independent review of child complaint decisions – referred to as CADRE (a technical assistance center funded by OSEP). Pam Williams, Director, Special Education Compliance Section, sent a list serve request with the CADRE group. Responses were received from six states. The Panel indicated that they would like to have the division pose the question and receive a written response from OSEP about going over the sixty day timelines.
- Due Process Withdrawal Survey was reviewed by Pam Williams with the Panel. For withdrawals that come in over the phone, the survey questions could be asked at the time the call is received. The Panel requested to see this information again at the end of the fiscal year.
- Data Regarding Due Process/Child Complaints – Mary Corey, Director, Special Education Data Coordination Section, and Pam Williams, discussed the information with the Panel. Numbers are not increasing.
- DESE Update – the 2004 IDEA Reauthorization Bill was signed by President Bush this morning (effective July 1, 2005). Information and points were provided regarding the reauthorization.
- DESE v Springfield (Lewis Case) – Melodie Friedebach, Assistant Commissioner/Special Education, indicated that the recent court decision held that students who meet the Missouri statutory definition of “severely handicapped” are the responsibility of DESE and the definition is not based on the student's disability itself, but on whether the student is able to benefit from a district program. The court also held that since DESE is responsible for these students, DESE must participate in Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meetings; and fund contracts for the placements for these students. The proposed regulations were presented to the State Board at their October meeting for their approval. These regulations are now considered

official. The state may become responsible for 700 additional students. The Division has made a request to the legislature for additional staff in three regional offices that would be able to go to the IEP meetings as well as for additional funding for these children. There are districts that do not have access to private agencies and would not benefit from the current funding. The Division is seeking statutory changes that would clarify that DESE is only responsible for those children enrolled in the State Schools for the Blind, Deaf, or Severely Handicapped. The Division would like to seek the creation of a new state funded “high need fund” that would be accessible by all districts, including special school districts, that would be disability and placement neutral. Once the child’s cost reached a certain amount, the state would pick up the additional cost. The Division would eliminate all of the other special purpose funds that are not in state statute (severe disabilities fund, extraordinary cost fund, etc.) and would have one fund (high need fund) in state statute. The Division is currently in the process of surveying some districts to see how many high need students they have. This information will be used when making the request to the legislature.

- Blind Study – The Commissioner recently asked the Division to do a study on the services that are delivered to students who are served by State Board Operated Programs (SBOPs). The studies are to focus on services offered by the State Board schools as well as similar students served in local school districts. The Division will begin this process with a study on services to blind and visually impaired students and plans to study services to students who are deaf and hard of hearing next and end with a study focused on severely handicapped students.

Panel Meeting – February 18, 2005

- Discussion of Formal Recommendation #3 – Content from the training modules was discussed. It was recommended that personnel involved in IEP meetings need to be taking the training modules. This is part of an improvement plan for a district during a forth cycle MSIP review, district personnel can be directed to attend module trainings. A motion was made and passed by the Panel that beginning with the forth cycle MSIP, training will be made mandatory for a district if it is found that it is needed.
- Discussion was provided regarding beginning an agenda item of “Unmet Needs” for future Panel meetings. The Public Comment Subcommittee will review this request.
- DESE Update
 - Budget/Legislative Update was provided
 - Division is reviewing the need to change the definition of severely handicapped in the state statutes.
 - Division has been reviewing the Reauthorized IDEA and has identified areas that Missouri will be out of compliance in and are drafting statutory changes.
- OSEP Response on Child Complaint Appeal – The Monitoring Committee will review OSEP responses.
- OSEP Response on Part B APR and March APR Submission - The APR will be submitted on March 31, 2005, and will provide a copy to the Evaluation Subcommittee. A report will be provided to the Panel in April.
- Highly Qualified Teachers – A report was provided to the Panel regarding Missouri’s interpretation of the definition of “Highly Qualified Teacher,” guidelines, and timeline of implementation.

Panel Meeting – April 15, 2005

- DESE provided an update on the school foundation formula statutes and legislation restoring First Steps. The two major changes in First Steps would be parents paying a co-pay (sliding fee scale) and insurance companies being billed.
- DESE indicated that they must have all regulation changes from the Reauthorization of IDEA in place by June 30, 2006. Currently DESE will make some statutory changes that will go into effect on August 28, 2005.
- Panel discussed with DESE the APR changes and how it may affect the subcommittees' work. The state performance plan is replacing the states' APR. The state performance plan must be a six -year plan with targets and improvements.

Panel Meeting – June 23-24, 2005

- The North Central Regional Resource Center came to work with the panel regarding the effective functions and processes of the Panel. John Copenhaver with Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center at Utah State University (MPRRC) provided an orientation of the special education advisory panel's roles and responsibilities. One item discussed during their presentation was the recommendation for a new member orientation. In addition, the Panel will have roles in the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process, IDEA implementation, and feedback to DESE on their annual performance report/state performance plan.
- DESE reported that the exceptional pupil aid funding that currently goes to districts for teachers, ancillary staff, and paraprofessionals will be rolled into the new foundation formula in 2006-2007.
- MAP-A Assessment - DESE indicated that reading the communication arts test to students with disabilities will no longer result in a valid assessment (level not determined).
- DESE reported that starting July 1 technical assistance coaches would be available at the RPDC. In addition, six consultants for positive behavioral supports and five compliance supervisors to be proactive in assisting districts in being compliant prior to monitoring.

Standing Committees

The panel decided that the following four standing committees would drive much of the panel's meeting agendas in the future. The committees are expected to meet prior to and during the SEAP meetings and provide updates and make formal recommendations to the entire panel for consideration.

Rules and Regulations Committee

1. Review any rule changes in special education proposed by DESE;
2. Review current rules and regulations and make appropriate recommendations for change; and
3. Provide a forum for keeping panel members advised of proposed legislation relevant to special education.

The Rules and Regulations Committee has reviewed the following:

- Lewis Decision
- IDEA Reauthorization

Evaluation Committee

1. Ensure that evaluations and data collection are appropriate and complete as directed by the panel and OSEP;
2. Ensure that any decisions are supported by data;
3. Track the improvement plan (CIMP); and
4. Prepare the Annual Report of the advisory panel.

The Evaluation Committee has:

- Reviewed and recommended a condensed and revised format of the SEAP 2003-2004 Annual Report which provided better efficiency.
- Links to DESE websites are provided within the Annual Report to refer to data tables, charts, graphs, and other pertinent public information.
- Most of the SEAP 2003-2004 Annual Report dissemination was recommended to be placed through the DESE web with some hard copies provided to select groups.
- Began to review the Missouri Special Education Annual Performance Report (APR) for the reporting period July 1, 2003, through June 30, 2004.
- The SEAP 2004-2005 Annual Report format is in the review and revision process. The current year's committees and panel activities are submitting reports and being compiled.

Monitoring Committee

1. Review statewide monitoring data trends;
2. Review corrective action plans (CAP) and improvement plans (IP) submitted to OSEP;
3. Review MSIP cycle plans; and
4. Review due process and child complaint results.

The Monitoring Committee of the Special Education Advisory panel (SEAP) is charged with:

- Reviewing statewide monitoring data trends.
- Reviewing corrective action plans (CAP) and state improvement plans (SIP) submitted to OSEP.
- Reviewing MSIP cycle plans.
- Reviewing due process and child complaint results.

This charge is drawn from IDEA, "Advise DESE in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under Part B of the Act."

Under this charge, the committee had several items on its agenda carried over from the previous reporting period:

- Clarification of "appropriate" (FAPE) for IEP teams (Formal Recommendation #3).
- Collection of data regarding due process withdrawals (Formal Recommendation #8).
- DESE's process for monitoring LEAs.
- Advising DESE on its response to OSEP's review of the State Improvement Plan (SIP).
- Development of a review process for Child Complaint findings/decisions (Formal Recommendation #9).

Clarification of "appropriate" (Formal Recommendation #3)

- DESE provided an extensive definition of FAPE - June 2004.
- The committee asked for information on how the definition and its practical application is provided to IEP teams. DESE reported it was done through approved training modules - *K-12 Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Decision-Making*,

- Providing ECSE Services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)*, and *Measurable Goals & Objectives or Benchmarks*. The committee asked for information and curriculum on these training modules - October 2004.
- DESE provided information and curriculum on approved training modules - *K-12 Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Decision-Making, Providing ECSE Services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)*, and *Measurable Goals & Objectives or Benchmarks* - available to IEP teams - December 2004.
 - The committee asked for impact data (numbers of LEAs participating in these key training modules. When provided by DESE, the committee found the impact data to be minimal at this time. SEAP recommended that DESE, through its 4th cycle MSIP monitoring, require the inclusion of approved training modules (*K-12 Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Decision-Making, Providing ECSE Services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)*, and *Measurable Goals & Objectives or Benchmarks*) in local improvement plans (LIPs) for those LEAs found out of compliance with key indicators (Document B 107.000 and 109.200 respectively) (Formal Recommendation #10) - February 2005.
 - DESE agreed to require *K-12 Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Decision-Making, Providing ECSE Services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)*, and *Measurable Goals & Objectives or Benchmarks* training included in the LIPs of LEAs found out of compliance on standards and indicators Document B 107.000 or 109.200 (respectively) - April 2005.
 - The committee recommended and the SEAP accepted that Formal Recommendation #3 be determined complete - June 2005.

Due Process Withdrawals (Formal Recommendation #8)

- DESE provided suggested content of a survey to gain additional information about causes of due process withdrawals but the SEAP did not believe it was complete enough to provide the needed data. A work team was appointed to develop language - June 2004.
- Survey language approved by the SEAP and DESE to report findings at the December 2005 SEAP meeting. Formal Recommendation #8 determined closed - October 2004.
- DESE reported preliminary data and methodology - December 2004.

Monitoring Process: Unable as yet to find some way to focus monitoring attention on key standards and indicators, the committee suspended its efforts when DESE announced its intention to work with Alan Coulter on "Focused Monitoring." Dr. Coulter provided a presentation on Focused Monitoring at the SEAP's August 2004 meeting. DESE is now working with stakeholder groups in developing a Focused Monitoring plan. The committee will review results.

State Improvement Plan (SIP): DESE received OSEP's review of Missouri's SIP and the committee reviewed and recommended approval by the SEAP of DESE's response to OSEP. There were some concerns about the need for and development of a variety of interagency agreements, though.

Child Complaint Review (Formal Recommendation #9):

- The committee recommended and the SEAP accepted the development of a child complaint investigation review process - June 2004.
- DESE had reservations with regards to how such a review would impact the statutory requirement to render a final decision within sixty days - August 2004.

- DESE surveying other states with regards to child complaint reviews and the sixty day timeline - October 2004.
- DESE reported some states do have child complaint review procedures which extend beyond the sixty day timeline and report OSEP does not seem to have a problem with it as long as it is incorporated within the state's regulations (State Plan). It was decided to seek a written opinion from OSEP - December 2004.
- OSEP advised that a final decision does need to be made within sixty days but that a state may have a review procedure which may go beyond that. DESE then wished to survey child complaint parties to determine a need for a review process - February 2005.
- DESE submitted language for a survey and the committee recommended some clarifications so DESE could immediately begin the survey process - June 2005.

In addition to these issues, the committee, in response to a notification by a parent seeking a review of an August 2004 Child Complaint finding/decision, offered and it was accepted by the SEAP, Formal Recommendation #11 asking DESE respond to parent inquiries within thirty days. It seems the parent requested the review in October 2004 and when she heard nothing from DESE, sent a letter to the Assistant Commissioner in February 2005 and still heard nothing from DESE and notified the chairperson of the Monitoring Committee in April 2005. A response to the parent's request was finally issued by DESE on May 18, 2005. DESE submitted an extensive report of its process for responding to parent inquiries and at the June 2005 meeting, the committee recommended and the SEAP accepted that Formal Recommendation #11 be determined completed.

Carry over issues for the next reporting period include (1) review of the Focused Monitoring plan, (2) review of due process withdrawal data as a result of the survey (Formal Recommendation #8), and (3) use of the Child Complaint satisfaction survey and report of data (Formal Recommendation #9).

Programs Committee

1. Provide panel input to the Effective Practices (EP) Section of the Division of Special Education; and
2. Act as an advisory board in the development of initiatives prior to the finished product.

The Programs Committee has:

- Reviewed and commented on a new brochure developed on professional development. The brochure has been published and distributed.
- Reviewed the impact of professional development activities on school improvement in the performance standards. It was determined that a protocol for measuring the impact of the staff development efforts is not currently in use. The committee recommended the Effective Practices Section design and implement a comprehensive evaluation system to assess the impact of professional development activities on the state's performance data.

Nominations Committee

1. Provide panel with slate of officers for next fiscal year for nomination, and
2. Review and recommend nomination requests for panel members.

The Nominations Committee:

- Selected a slate of officers to serve for FY 2005-2006.
- The Panel voted from the selection and chose new officers.
- Applicants were recommended to DESE for nomination to serve as Panel members.

Future Focus

During the 2006 fiscal year, the panel will continue to advise DESE on issues of general supervision, early childhood special education transition, parent involvement, FAPE/LRE, and secondary transition. In addition, the panel will continue to advise DESE on issues surrounding No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the reauthorization of IDEA. The ongoing work of the standing committees (Programs, Rules and Regulations, Evaluations, Monitoring, Nominations, and Public Comment committees) should result in a number of formal recommendations to DESE in an effort to improve special education in Missouri.

Closing

The advisory panel continuously works towards the understanding of, respect for, support for, and the appropriate education of, all children with disabilities in Missouri schools. The panel believes in optimizing the educational achievement of every child through a strong education system that is proactive and supportive of students, families, and educators. To this end, the panel will use its strength as a broad-based constituency group to plan an active and influential role in decisions affecting policies, programs, and services. Improving the education of children with disabilities is never an accident; it is the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, skillful execution, and the vision to see obstacles as opportunities.

Acknowledgements

The panel wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Melodie Friedebach, Debby Parsons, and Lina Browner, along with other DESE staff, for their assistance in providing essential information through a variety of reports and presentations.

Links

Additional information about the panel can be found at:

www.dese.mo.gov/divspeced/Administration/AdvisoryPanel/94142mainpage.html

Additional information from the Division of Special Education can be found at:

www.dese.mo.gov/divspeced/

Additional information about the Missouri Continuous Improvement Process, including the Self-Assessment, Improvement Plan, and Annual Performance Report can be found at:

www.dese.mo.gov/divspeced/IPpage.html

Missouri DESE maintains a webpage of special education links at:

www.dese.mo.gov/divspeced/othersites2.html

2004-2005 Membership Roster

Jeaneal Alexander-Columbia
Tamara Arthaud-Springfield
Amanda Coleman-Kansas City
Dan Colgan-St. Joseph
Nan Davis-Kirksville
Melodie Friedebach-Jefferson City
Dennis Gragg-Jefferson City
Patricia Grassa-Springfield
Michael Hanrahan-Cameron
Eileen Huth-Ballwin
Patricia Jackson-Raytown
Amy James-Jefferson City
Kent Kolaga-Jefferson City
Rebecca Largent-Columbia
Sandra Levels-Jefferson City
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